

A LOSER

it was on the train to Del Mar and I had left my seat to go to the bar car, I had a couple of beers and came back and sat down.

"pardon me," said the lady next to me, "but you're sitting in my husband's seat."

"oh yeah," I said and I picked up my Racing Form and began reading it; the first race looked tough. then this man was standing there: "hey, buddy, you're in my seat!"

"I told him," said the lady, "but he didn't pay any attention."

"hey," I told the man, "this is my seat!"

"it's bad enough he takes my seat," said the man, "but now he's reading my Racing Form!"

I looked at him, he was puffing his chest out.

"look at you," I said, "puffing your god damned chest out!"

"you're in my seat, buddy!" he told me.

"look," I said, "I've been in this seat since this train left the station. ask anybody around here!"

"oh no, that's not right," said a man behind me, "he was in that seat when the train left the station!"

"are you sure?"

"sure I'm sure!"

I got up and walked into the next train car. there was my seat by the window and there was my Racing Form.

I went back to the other train car where the man was reading his Racing Form.

"hey, look," I started to say

"forget it," said the man.

"just leave us alone," said his wife.

I walked back to the other train car, sat down and looked out the window

pretending to be vaguely interested in the landscape,

glad that the people in my car didn't know what the people in the other car knew.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA